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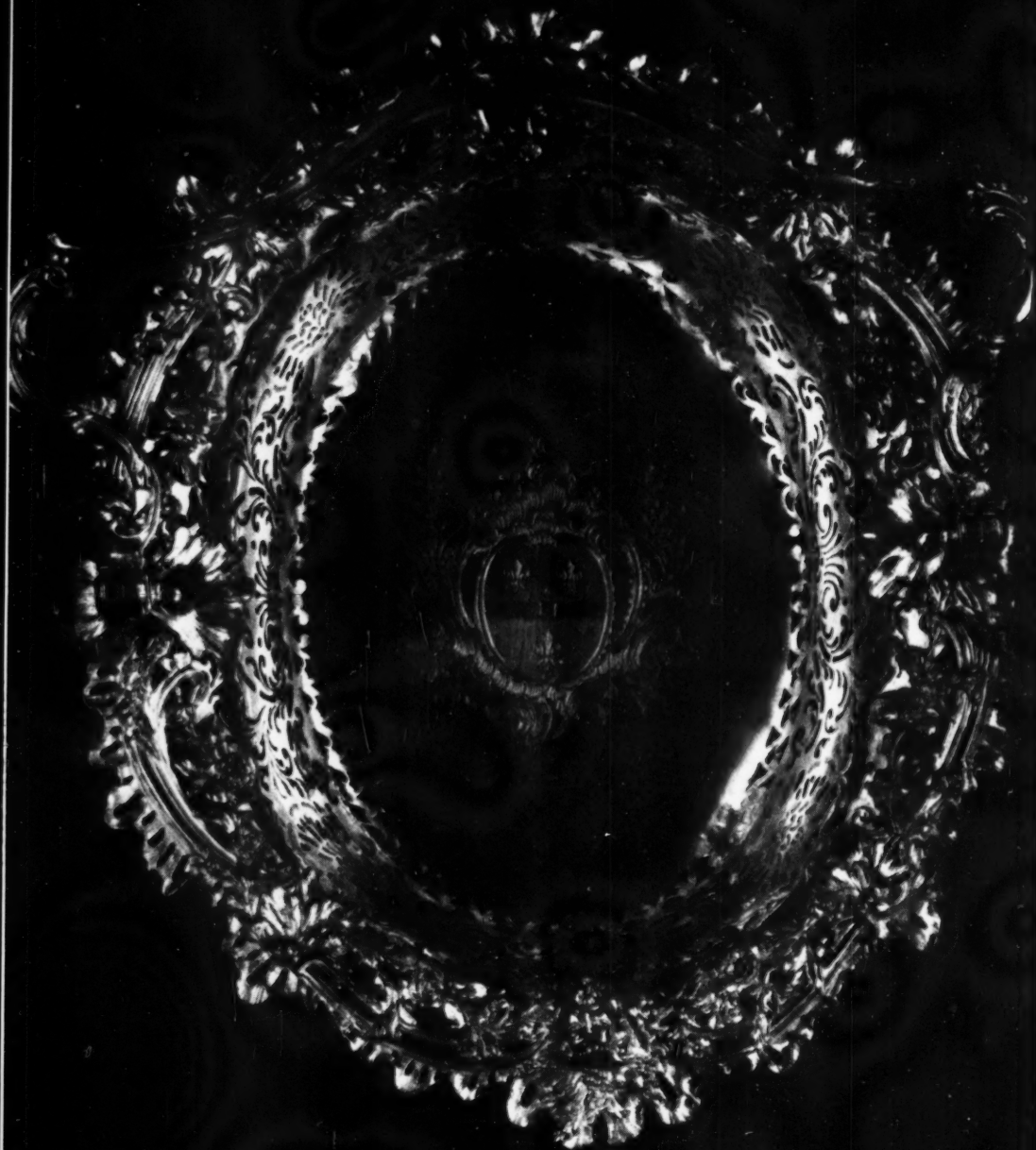
FEB 02 1953

FINE ARTS
READING ROOM



ANDIRON WITH THE
FIGURE OF CERES
by ALESSANDRO VITTORIA
Italian (1525-1608)





CAKE BASKET (detail), by WILLIAM CRIPPS. *Gift of The Women's Committee, 1951*

CAKE BASKET
by WILLIAM CRIPPS
London, 1751

Gift of
The Women's Committee
1951



INSTITUTIONS have individual characters just as do people. They can be agreeable or disagreeable, reserved or friendly, lively or pompous. We hope that our own institution has warmth and friendliness as well as the dignity that great works of art cannot help but give. If it has that character, it is due in large to our good fortune in our Women's Committee. This committee has for years past not only taken charge of, but paid the expenses of, our museum openings and has imparted to them a delightful atmosphere of graciousness and hospitality, dignity and friendliness. This is a note that we are happy to have struck in the public occasions of a museum that belongs to, is supported by, and is enjoyed by all the people of this great metropolitan community. From time to time the committee has also made other contributions to the museum. The most recent is the gift of a fine piece of English eighteenth century silver, a splendid cake basket by William Cripps, which embodies all that is best in the rococo style and is a notable addition to our representation of the English silversmiths.

We owe very warm thanks to all the women who have served on and contributed to this committee, and in particular to the officers who have assumed the responsibility over the past years. It is impossible here to list all of those who have served, but I want at least to mention with lively appreciation the officers of this year and of the past two years:

1952-53

Mrs. Alvan Macauley, Jr., <i>Chairman</i>	Mrs. W. Warren Shelden, <i>Secretary</i>
Mrs. Henry Wineman, <i>Vice-Chairman</i>	Mrs. Ernest Kanzler, <i>Treasurer</i>

1950-51

Mrs. John Owen, III, *Chairman*
Mrs. Alger Shelden,
 Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Edward T. Gushee, *Secretary*
Mrs. Ernest Kanzler, *Treasurer*

1951-52

Mrs. Alger Shelden, *Chairman*
Mrs. Alvan Macauley, Jr.,
 Vice-Chairman
Mrs. David Rust, *Secretary*
Mrs. Ernest Kanzler, *Treasurer*

THE BOWDEN CHILDREN
by JOHN HOPPNER

We have acquired this winter, as the gift of Mr. and Mrs. William A. Fisher, a most attractive portrait by John Hoppner (1758-1810) of two English children, Master John William Bowden, aged five, and his sister Mary Anne Bowden, aged three. The group is one of Hoppner's most happy studies of children. The contrast between the sturdy independence of the boy and the shyness of his little sister is very well observed and shows the freshness and spontaneity of Hoppner's portrayal of children. One has only to compare this picture with the famous picture of Hoppner's own children, now in the National Gallery, Washington, as the gift of Mr. Joseph Widener, to realize that Mr. and Mrs. Fisher have given us one of the outstanding examples of Hoppner's portraiture in America.

The little boy in this picture grew up to be a figure of some importance in English intellectual and religious life. I owe to the kindness of Mr. Edward Fowles, of Duveen Brothers, the information that this is the John William Bowden who became the intimate friend of John Henry Newman and a writer of some weight in the Tractarian movement. Born in London, February 21, 1798, he was the eldest son of John Bowden, of Fulham, Middlesex, and Grosvenor Place, London. He entered Trinity College, Oxford, in 1817 on the same day as Newman, who described their friendship in a letter to the Rev. John Keble (September 14, 1844), "He [Bowden] is my oldest friend. I have been most intimate with him for twenty-seven years. He was sent to call on my the day after I came into residence — he introduced me to College and University — he is the link between me and Oxford . . . We used to live in each other's rooms as undergraduates and men used to mistake our names and call us by each other's. When he married, he used to make a similar mistake himself, and call me Elizabeth and her Newman."

After leaving Oxford Bowden became Commissioner of Stamps and on June 6, 1823, married the youngest daughter of Sir John Edward Swinburne (whose portrait by Gainsborough is also in our collection). But his friendship with Newman continued and after 1833 he took a strong part in the Oxford Revival movement in the English church, contributing to the book-of-hymns, *Lyra Apostolica*, *Tracts for the Times*, and writing several important essays for the *British Critic*. The Dictionary of National Biography says of him: "How completely at one Newman and Bowden were throughout the whole of the Oxford



THE BOWDEN
CHILDREN
by JOHN HOPPNER
English (1758-1810)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs.
William A. Fisher,
1951

movement is shown on almost every page of Newman's *Apologia*." In the spring of 1839 Bowden's health began to fail but in 1840 he brought out his chief work, *The Life of Gregory the Seventh*. He died at his father's house in Grosvenor Place, September 15, 1844, and Newman, who stayed with the family, described his death in a letter to Keble and added:

... They have a picture I had not seen for a number of years, by Hoppner, of J.W.B. a boy of four years and his younger sister. He asked how he should like to be painted — and he said 'drawing a church' — so Fulham Church is in the background, and he with a pencil and paper."

The little girl, Mary Anne Bowden, died on May 31, 1819, at Fulham, at the age of nineteen.

Hoppner had a country home at Fulham, so that he was a neighbor of the children's father. The picture was probably painted there and remained at Fulham, for it was never shown at the Royal Academy. It remained in possession of the Bowden family until early in the present century. It was sold then to Lord Michelham at whose sale at London, November 23, 1926, it brought the very large price of 11,000 guineas. It passed thence to the collection of Mr. and Mrs. William A. Fisher, Detroit, and now by their generous gift becomes the property of our museum, where its unaffected simplicity and charm of feeling will, we feel certain, give great pleasure to many people.

E. P. RICHARDSON

Cat No. 1054. Canvas. Height 30 inches; width 40 inches. Painted in 1803. Collections: the Bowden family; Lord Michelham, London, 1926, no. 289; Mr. and Mrs. William A. Fisher, Detroit. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William A. Fisher. Acc. no. 51.291. References: McKay and Roberts, *John Hoppner, R.A.*, London, 1909, p. 31; *Correspondence of John Henry Newman with John Keble and Others*, 1839-1845, London, 1917, p. 335.

ALESSANDRO VITTORIA IN THE INSTITUTE

The rebuilding of the Doge's Palace in Venice after two serious fires in 1574 and 1577 is one of the focal points in the history of European art. In the reconstruction of the building during the last decades of the century the architect Antonio da Ponte, the painters Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese, the sculptor Vittoria, and a crowd of other artists, created the magnificent series of rooms on the third floor (*piano nobile*) and the Hall of the Grand Council and the Sala del Scrutinio on the second floor, which every visitor to Venice knows. Seldom has so much genius, experience and skill been concentrated upon a single building. It would be hard to overestimate the importance of this reconstruction. Venetian art, already outstanding in decorative qualities, achieved a new conception of the decorative ensemble, uniting painting, sculpture and architecture, and a new richness of style which were to inspire the course of European art for two centuries.

The Venetian sculpture of this movement represents one of the supreme achievements of decorative splendor, which it is not the less important to represent in an American collection because it is so foreign to the sculpture of our day. It is impossible to show the great decorative ensembles of Venice but we have been fortunate enough to acquire an important series of bronzes which reflect the style of Vittoria and his contemporaries. Alessandro Vittoria (1525-1608), the chief of this generation, is beyond doubt one of the great decorative sculptors. He was a pupil of Sansovino but, like Tintoretto, was strongly influenced by Michelangelo's works. Assimilating Michelangelo's mannerism, he created an art of figure sculpture perfectly adapted to the decorative enrichment of archi-



JUPITER

by ALESSANDRO VITTORIA

Italian (1525-1608)

Gift of Mrs. Ralph Harman Booth

1943

ecture, which he elaborated not only in the Doge's Palace, but a splendid series of villas, palaces and churches in Venice and on the Terra Firma.

The bronze *Jupiter*, with his thunderbolt and eagle, which Mrs. Ralph Harman Booth gave to our collection in 1943, represents the basic element of Vittoria's style — the human figure.¹ This bronze exists in a number of versions, of which the best known is in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Our bronze has been less worked over with the graver after casting than the Vienna example. Its rough cast quality makes it perhaps more sympathetic to twentieth century sculpture although the highly finished Vienna bronze is more characteristic of sixteenth century taste. It shows the robust and subtle double twist of the figure which Vittoria's contemporary, Lomazzo, called the *forma serpentina*, that became characteristic of Vittoria's style after 1575. The vigorous figure shows the strong, easy grace, the rich play of form, the power to make a single figure into an interesting decorative harmony, that make Vittoria's art remarkable.

It was more characteristic of the Venetian decorative manner to combine the human figure with animals real or fanciful, foliage, shells, even architectural

elements, into compositions whose ease and plastic freedom deceive us into supposing that it is a simple thing to invent harmonies out of these difficult and stubborn shapes. A beautiful example is the design by Vittoria of a door knocker representing *Neptune and his Sea Horses*, purchased in 1947 from City funds.² The figure of *Neptune* is closely related to the *Jupiter* and must date from the same period.

What a wonderful power of invention shaped these hippocamps, whose twisting bodies form the lyre-shape of the knocker, these leaves and sea shells, this menacing figure with upraised trident, into a harmony so robust and opulent! This doorknocker, one of the most handsome pieces of late sixteenth century Venetian decorative bronze, enjoyed great popularity. There are fine old casts still on the doors of some of the palaces in Venice and in the Museo Correr and in collections in Vienna, Paris and elsewhere. Our example is a good late sixteenth century cast whose glossy black patina adds materially to the sea-wetted splendor of the whole.

Finally, and most imposing of all, are a pair of bronze andirons,³ purchased in 1951 from City appropriations. It was one of the achievements of Vittoria and his circle to seize upon the andiron which, though a universal object, has seldom risen very far above its simple utilitarian nature, and give it its highest



NEPTUNE AND HIS SEA HORSES
by ALESSANDRO VITTORIA
City Appropriation, 1947

ANDIRON WITH THE FIGURE OF
MINERVA, by ALESSANDRO
VITTORIA
City Appropriation, 1951



artistic expression. The bronze andirons of late sixteenth century Venice are not only noble in size but were so beautiful in figural decoration and so richly fanciful in design that the great examples are highly prized by museums as works of Renaissance art.

These, now in Detroit, are among the great examples. They come originally, according to the information given us, from the Liechtenstein collections. Although they were seen by Bode (who wrote an expertise in 1926 attributing them to Vittoria) they have never been published before.

At the top are two statues of *Minerva* and *Ceres*, symbolizing *War* and *Peace*. There are superb casts of the same statuettes, generally attributed to Vittoria, of which other versions crown a famous pair of andirons now in the Morgan Library, New York, and a third pair, clearly once also the tops of andirons, are in the Altman Collection in the Metropolitan Museum.

The unique thing about our andirons is the supports, executed in a style of great beauty and originality. Rising from a triangular base is a pyramid formed of the free interplay of figures, masks, herms with and without wings, rams' heads, foliage, strings of pearls, palmettes and architectural forms such as volutes and mouldings, interweaving in brilliant and fantastic harmony. Cast in two sections, and highly finished with the graver, these bases are superb illustrations

of the fertile and inventive use of ornament in Venetian decorative sculpture. Such a free, rich, intricate interplay of forms belongs to a period when sculptors were so much at ease in their medium that they could solve the most difficult problems, and could create effects of splendor and opulence in the grand style.

It seems possible to me that the andirons may once have been taller. The transition from the base of the statuettes to the support is not as smooth as one expects. It may be that a transition member has been removed at some time to fit the andirons to a smaller fireplace. Yet they are very beautiful and complete in design as they are.

Are we to suppose that these stands and other bronzes of this type were designed by Vittoria, as Bode believed? A generation ago it was customary to assign all Venetian decorative bronzes to one or other of the great sculptors, Vittoria, Campagna or Roccatagliata, as the case may be. Yet it grows very hard to sustain these old attributions, when one finds close variants of the same design attributed to several different artists. The best scholarship of today avoids too dogmatic attributions. The bronze workshops of Venice seem to have made their beautiful pieces of decorative furniture under the inspiration of the great sculptors, but elaborated them in their own way, with superlative craftsmanship and taste. Professor Middeldorf, of the University of Chicago, who has studied these stands, sees a strong Roman influence in their fantastic profusion of herms and grotesques, as if some migrating craftsman had brought to Venice some of the decorative ideas of Guglielmo della Porta. The designs are unique, however, of extreme beauty and very splendid style. They represent the art of Venice at the close of the sixteenth century when artists like Vittoria and Tintoretto invented a style for decorative ensembles that cannot be surpassed in richness and grace of plastic imagery.

E. P. RICHARDSON

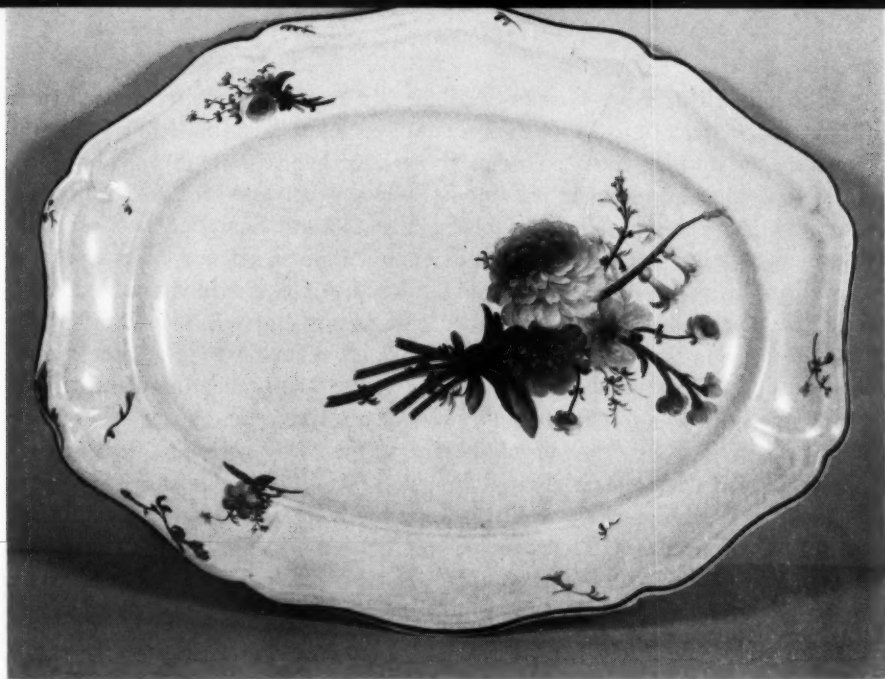
¹ Acc. no. 43.483. Height 12½ inches. Gift of Mrs. Ralph Harman Booth, 1943.

² Acc. no. 47.141. Height 16⅝ inches; width 11 inches. City Appropriation, 1947.

³ Andirons: *Minerva*, Acc. no. 51.54. Height 45 inches. *Ceres*, Acc. no. 51.55. Height 45 inches. City Appropriation, 1951.

TWO EXAMPLES OF 18TH CENTURY FRENCH FAIENCE

Throughout the eighteenth century, the French porcelain industry was the spoon-fed darling of kings and princes; its less glamorous cousin, the faience industry, had to forage for itself. Essentially commercial ventures, the faience factories supported themselves by supplying the large demand for a serviceable, attractive—and cheap—tableware. The economic success which this market insured enabled them to produce in addition finely painted wares of superb quality and distinctive style. Two delightful examples of these wares have re-



PLATTER. FRENCH (Strasbourg, Hannong factory), 3rd quarter of the 18th century.
Anonymous Gift, 1949

cently been added to the Institute's growing collection of European ceramic art — a platter from Strasbourg¹ and a plate from the smaller and lesser-known factory at Les Islettes,² in the valley of the Meuse.

The famous Strasbourg flower style, of which our oval dish is a typical example, grew out of a desire to follow the vogue in German porcelain painting. Adam-Frederick de Lowenfinck, a painter who came to Strasbourg from Höchst in 1747, has been credited with introducing the two types of floral painting which then became a prominent part of the factory's production until its close. Flowers painted in flat colors within finely outlined borders (a mode adapted by German porcelain painters from Japanese wares) were known as *fleurs des Indes*; those painted naturalistically in a free wash technique (after the "deutschen Blumen" of Meissen) were known as *fleurs fines*. In the sales catalogue published at Strasbourg in 1771, pieces were listed as available in "blanc, peinture des Indes, peinture fine," etc., and priced accordingly. Our platter is an example of the latter, and preferred, type, though probably of the last period, after 1770.³ The style reached its highest development from about 1760-70; during the following decade colors became softer, the washes broader and more diffuse, the style losing some of its brilliant rococo energy. The ambitious owner and director of the Strasbourg factory, Joseph Hannong, had by this time turned his attentions and managerial abilities away from faience in an ill-fated attempt to establish a successful porcelain manufacture, a venture which ultimately resulted in the financial ruin and shutting down of the entire firm in 1781.

The naturalistic *fleurs fines* of Strasburg are distinguished not only for their fine watercolor style, but also for their distinctive palette, dominated by variations of carmine or purple. Such colors as these, together with high keyed greens, yellows, and blues, were made possible in faience decoration by the introduction of the *petit feu* technique, brought to Strasburg from Germany at the same time as the new styles of floral decoration. Prior to this time, faience decoration was achieved exclusively in the limited range of robust colors which could tolerate the high temperatures necessary to fire the glaze, since glaze and painting were fired in a single operation. In the new method, enamel colors (of greater variety and delicacy) were applied over the already glazed ware, and this painting was fired in another operation in a muffle kiln at a lower temperature (*petit feu*). Most emphasized of the *petit feu* colors were varying shades of rose, lavender, and carmine derived from the celebrated "purple of Cassius," an enamel produced from gold and familiar not only in the decoration of European porcelain, but also as the keynote of the 18th century Chinese palette, *famille rose*. The bouquet on our platter is dominated by this tone.

Unlike most of the faience factories, Strasburg sometimes used, during the period of Joseph Hannong's management (1762-81), a most elaborate system of marking. Our platter bears the initials of Joseph Hannong and the number 108. The number refers to the model list of the factory as published in the *Prix Marchand* in 1771, and is a reminder not only of the organizing zeal of Hannong but also of the increasing industrialization of the ceramic craft in the late 18th century.

PLATE. FRENCH (Les Islettes
factory), late 18th century
Anonymous Gift, 1951



The strongly plastic qualities of the shapes of these plates (qualities very appealing to the modern feeling for the medium) were probably as much the result of special economic circumstances as of ceramic design. Haug reserves for them a particular description — *façon d'argent* — in recognition of their resemblance to the contours of contemporary silver. Such designs seem to have become prominent in Strasburg production at about the same time that economic exigencies of the Seven Years War forced the nobility to make another sacrifice of silver to replenish the depleted royal treasury. In such circumstances, faience became an easy solution to the problem of furnishing the stripped tables with appropriate wares.

In 1786 the faience industry, which had throughout the century been struggling against governmental restrictions imposed for the protection of Royal porcelain manufactures, and against the growing competition of both German and Chinese porcelain, suffered the death blow — France signed an agreement removing the prohibitive importation duty on the fine industrial pottery of England.

By 1850, there were almost no ordinary faience factories in operation. Les Islettes, founded in 1764, was one of the few to enjoy prosperity into the first quarter of the 19th century, perhaps because of its topical specialty — popular commemorative wares of the Napoleonic Wars. Chinoiserie represents an earlier style, favored at all the factories of eastern France in the second half of the 18th century. At Les Islettes, it was the specialty of a particular painter, the elder Dupré, who in later years added to his fanciful Chinamen the sideburns of Napoleon's soldiers. Our plate,⁴ typically rococo in style, shape, and palette, must have been produced early, though not before 1785, the date at which the *petit feu* technique was introduced at Les Islettes.

VIRGINIA HARRIMAN

¹ Acc. no. 49.515. Length 14½ inches; width 11 inches. Mark: JH 108. Anonymous Gift, 1949.

² Acc. no. 51.289. Diameter 11¼ inches. No mark. Anonymous Gift, 1951.

³ Compare *Répertoire de la Faïence Française*, Vol. 5, "Strasbourg," plate 33 (B) and plate 41 (B). Bouquets and marks on these pieces are of exactly the same type as those on our platter; they are both placed in the period 1770-1780.

⁴ Compare *Répertoire de la Faïence Française*, Vol. 1, "Les Islettes," plate 3 (E). Shape and decoration correspond very closely to our plate. The colors as described are exactly the same — green and violet predominating, brown, yellow and blue; there is also the same distinctive treatment of the foliage. See also text, Vol. 6, p. 86.

Bibliography: Lane, Arthur, *French Faience*, London, 1948; Haug, Hans, *La Faïencerie de Strasbourg*, Strasbourg et Paris, 1950; *Répertoire de la Faïence Française*, Paris, 1935.

**THE MR. AND MRS. NORMAN D. JORDAN COLLECTION
of WEDGWOOD CERAMICS**

No English ceramics are better known in this country, or represented by better examples, than the products of the Wedgwood factory. Yet, in the growing section of Decorative Arts at the Institute, there were until recently few pieces of the famous ware. Thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Norman D. Jordan, the Institute is now the owner of a Wedgwood collection, selected with love and understanding by those friends of our museum. In this and the following page are reproduced some of the most characteristic of these gifts. Even in this carefully chosen collection several pieces stand out, such as the powerful *Death of a Warrior*, an example of which was shown in the Wedgwood exhibition held at the Institute a few years back, and the delicate, cameo-like, *Apotheosis of a Princess*. But the fifty-odd pieces which form at present the Jordan Collection all have characteristics of their own. Some are merely charming, like the center of the Queen's ware jelly mold; others are great works of art, like the jasper medallions with which historically-minded curators like best to associate the name Wedgwood. All possess the extraordinary qualities of craftsmanship and taste which made the Wedgwood products the most popular of all English wares.

P. L. G.



DEATH OF A ROMAN WARRIOR, black basalt ware. The subject is copied from a relief on a sarcophagus, discovered in the eighteenth century near Rome, which contained the ashes of the Emperor Alexander Severus and his mother, Julia Mamaea. Wedgwood discussed the difficulties of firing this large and important plaque in a letter addressed to Bentley, his associate, in February, 1776.

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Norman D. Jordan, 1952



THREE MEDALLIONS. From left to right: Joseph Priestley; William Pitt; Dr. Samuel Johnson. Jasper ware; white relief on dipped blue ground. Other famous personages represented in the Jordan Collection are Sir William Hamilton, Lady de La Pole, Lady Auckland, the Duke of York, Sir Thomas Banks. Most of these Wedgwood medallions were modelled in the last quarter of the 18th century by artists such as John Flaxman or William Hackwood.

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Norman D. Jordan, 1952

"APOTHEOSIS OF A PRINCESS." Black jasper background, with figures on white relief. Wedgwood factory, early 19th century
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Norman D. Jordan, 1952



THE CHECKER PLAYERS
by GEORGE CALEB BINGHAM

In 1917 Fern Helen Rusk, an assistant in classical archeology and the history of art at the University of Missouri, published an excellent little book on a local artist called *George Caleb Bingham, the Missouri Artist*. The publisher was a printer in Jefferson City, Missouri, and the edition of five hundred copies was more than enough to satisfy the public interested in an artist who was then almost unknown outside his state. Rusk's book lists the title of sixty paintings, other than portraits, of which thirty-four, or more than half, were unlocated and known only from old newspaper references, estate records or similar sources.

When Albert Christ-Janer brought out a book on Bingham in 1940, the United States had begun to take a new interest in its own past and had recognized the painter as an artist of great individuality, one of the great figures of American romantic painting. However, the list of his known works remained surprisingly small. Christ-Janer gives a smaller list of subject pictures and landscapes than Rusk's and out of thirty-seven titles, the location of twenty-one was still unknown.

A few pictures have been discovered since. Each one has been an event for those interested in American painting. *The Trappers' Return* of 1851, which we acquired last year through Mr. Dexter M. Ferry's generosity, is one of the great ones.

It is a pleasure to announce the rediscovery of another important work, which was apparently last recorded in a newspaper article in the *Missouri Statesman* of October 31, 1851. The article (which was reprinted in the *Bulletin of the American Art-Union* in December, 1851) described a visit to Bingham's studio in Columbia, Missouri. The anonymous author was interested chiefly in the large canvas of the *Country Election*, which he rightly considered a most original work, but he added:

There was also in his studio a smaller painting, another political scene of great originality of conception and beauty of finish, to-wit: CANDIDATE ELECTIONEERING. We likewise examined the CHESS PLAYERS, and a very beautiful landscape SCENE ON THE OHIO. All these paintings are executed with a master's hand, and are well worthy the examination of connoisseurs of the art . . .¹

The second of these pictures was mislabeled, by a very natural lapse of mind. Bingham himself mentioned it in a letter written from New York seven months before this newspaper story:

New York, March 30, 1851

. . . You wish to know what I am doing. I am now painting the Emigration of Boone and his Family to Kentucky . . . The



THE CHECKER PLAYERS, by GEORGE CALEB BINGHAM, American (1811-1879)
Gift of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., 1952

pictures I painted last year are all sold with the exception of
the checker players . . .²

This picture, painted in 1850, and representing *Checker Players*, a subject unique in Bingham's work, remained out of sight for a century until it appeared on the art market this winter and was acquired for our collection, again through the noble generosity of Mr. Dexter M. Ferry, Jr. The canvas has neither signature nor date but it is signed all over with the indubitable marks of Bingham's art.³

It is a picture of great interest not only for itself but because it is in a class of one in Bingham's work. His early pictures — whether of river life, election scenes, the Emigration of Boone, or farmers shooting for the beef — all have the general character of open-air landscapes with figures: the figures are numerous and seen at a little distance, so figures and landscape are rather evenly balanced. In the *Checker Players* the simple compact group of three persons is seen so

close to the picture plane that the figures dominate the space. Indeed it is the only genre picture known by Bingham in which the principal figures are cut by the frame. This is as much a rarity in American genre in general. Where did Bingham get the idea? Presumably from engravings of the great Dutch figure painters. But in attempting a new kind of figure composition, he met a new problem: figures on this scale, if they are to satisfy us, must be given a greater degree of individuality and psychological relationship than is required by ordinary genre figures.

Bingham's genre pictures are distinguished for their unity of mood — his figures share a moment of life together in a satisfying way. Yet here he attempted a picture in which the whole point, upon which the picture must stand or fall, was in the tying of the psychological knot. It must be said that he succeeded. The interweaving of three lives in a moment of pleasurable suspense, as old Rough-and-Ready puts his finger on his piece and prepares to move, and David Harum across the board, and the tavern keeper leaning on the bar, watch him, is a moment of life created in a remarkably convincing way.

And what a pair of characters these opponents are: "I wouldn't want to play checkers with them!" exclaimed one lively person who looked at the picture in my office, and I can share the feeling. They are perfect specimens of the shrewd back-country lawyer or merchant, who must have been one of the striking types of early American life, for our literature is full of him. David Harum is perhaps his most famous portrait. But Washington Irving, Timothy Flint, John P. Kennedy, William Gilmore Simms and all the other writers of rustic genre knew him well, as well as the writers of those volumes of *Reminiscences of the early Bench and Bar of X..... County*, in which so many good stories of the frontier are embedded in dust. Honest Abe Lincoln learned his use of humorous anecdote and his shrewd knowledge of human nature from practicing law among men like these.

Probably Bingham is, like Winslow Homer, a painter who means more to Americans than he ever will to foreigners. A whole stream of our racial past pours through his pictures, as English social life does through Reynolds, or French through Watteau. They spring out of life, a special form of life observed with keen eyes and an exceptional mind. Yet as an artist Bingham was also an extraordinary figure. He achieved a large simplicity of drawing, an architectonic dignity of grouping, and a use of light and tone that are wholly personal and on a higher level than most painters of his time of any school. In this picture he used his characteristic strong colors. The checker player at the left wears a tawny buff coat and dusty blue trousers; his opponent is dressed in a light olive green coat and wears a bright red neckerchief; the tavern keeper's coat is also blue, set off by a white shirt collar and scarlet neckerchief. These colors glow in the light against the warm shadows behind yet with all their luminosity, they are only accents within the overall poetry of air and light that is Bingham's special gift.

E. P. RICHARDSON

Cat. No. 1060. Canvas. Height 25 inches; width 30 inches. Acc. no. 52.27. Gift of Mr. Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., 1952.

¹ See A. Christ-Janer, *George Caleb Bingham of Missouri*, 1940, p. 61.

² *Idem*, p. 57.

³ When I first saw it, the canvas was in its original condition, well preserved and apparently untouched since Bingham's day: it has since been cleaned and relined.

A GROUP OF EARLY GLASS

Our collection of early glass has been growing steadily to such a degree that it can now indicate, at least, the wide range and variety of the output of American glassworkers from the time of Caspar Wistar's factory (1739-1780) to the middle of the nineteenth century. One can enjoy the many beautiful, and a few extremely rare, pieces, among the Stiegel type, pieces in the South Jersey tradition, including New York state examples. Other items were made by the Boston and Sandwich Glass Company and contemporary glass houses; from closer by come pieces from Ohio and other Mid-west glass works, as well as from Mt. Clemens, Michigan.

Recent acquisitions have enlarged the group of Blown Three Mold glass by a number of handsome pieces, blown and patterned in full-sized, hinged piece

THREE EXAMPLES OF BLOWN THREE MOLD GLASS. American, 2nd quarter of the 19th century.
Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1951



molds. Among them are a graceful decanter and glasses, a pair of sugar bowls with covers, a tall celery vase, and an unusually fine large footed bowl. To make this type of glass, the blower made a small bubble on the end of his pipe, inserted it into a mold with patterned inner surface, and blew until the molten glass was forced into every cavity of the mold. Sectional molds, usually of two or three pieces, facilitated removal of the product. By using such molds, our ingenious glassworkers simulated the costly cut glass imported from England and Ireland by adapting its patterns to blown glass, as well as developing patterns distinctly American.

Although full-size metal piece-molds were re-introduced into glass houses in the late eighteenth century, those which formed patterns as well as the shape of the object were probably not used until after 1800. When importation of foreign goods stopped for a time after the War of 1812, and subsequent overexpansion of all businesses in America was followed by a depression (1817-1820), the makers of fine glass were particularly hard hit. Many glass houses closed; others looked for new developments in the industry. The McKearins tell us,¹ "Thus it seems likely that, with the dire need to meet the cut-rate prices of imported glassware to compete successfully with English and Irish cut glass, Blown Three Mold was developed about 1820 as a line of commercial table ware produced in quantity and probably priced to meet thinner pocketbooks." That it was produced in quantity may be deduced from the fact that, in the McKearins' researches, they examined well over five thousand pieces of the Blown Three Mold glass, and established that more than four hundred basic molds had been employed. The American versions of these patterns were true adaptations, and not mere imitations, and often assumed a stylistic character distinct from that of the original European model. Hand work was still needed. The full-sized mold was used primarily to set the pattern, but certain types of pieces, after removal of the gather from the mold, were fashioned mainly by offhand methods, the ultimate form shaped by expansion and manipulation.

The tall celery vase,² with flaring tooled rim, was probably blown and patterned in a large flip mold, forming a pattern of diamond diaper band between two bands of vertical ribbing, while its low pedestal foot may well have been blown and patterned in a tumbler mold. A very similar one³ is thought to have been made in New England about 1820 to 1835. The circular bowl⁴ of clear lead glass, an unusually rare piece, was probably patterned in a decanter or large flip mold, and its pedestal foot in a flip mold, then shaped into a shallow pattern and attached. The Boston and Sandwich Glass Company made some bowls of this type between 1825 and 1835.

Extremely graceful in contour is the footed decanter,⁵ with matching stopper. Blown from clear lead glass, its globular body tapers to a cylindrical neck, and rests on a flaring circular foot, drawn from the same gather. "Decanters with this drawn out foot are extremely rare — we know of a few in clear glass, only one in color,"⁶ (a reddish-amethyst one, close to ours in form and pattern). Both decanters employ the same geometric pattern, a wide band of blocks of alter-



(Left) BLOWN THREE MOLD FOOTED BOWL. American (probably Boston or Sandwich Glass Company), 2nd quarter of the 19th century. Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1951

(Right) BLOWN THREE MOLD CELERY VASE. American (probably New England), about 1820-35. Gift of the Elizabeth and Allan Shelden Fund, 1951

nating sunbursts and diamond diapering between bands of diagonal and vertical ribbing.

Two small handled mugs, one barrel-shaped,⁷ the other straight-sided,⁸ bear similar patterns of diamond diaper between bands of vertical ribbing. Slightly different combinations of similar motifs occur again on the taller⁹ of two rare sugar bowls; a shorter, broader bowl¹⁰ employs the sunburst. Both have dome covers with deep infolded rims and flat-topped button finials; both bowls entailed considerable hand labor. The finial of the more squatty bowl is so broad it can serve as a foot, and permit the cover to be used for a small dish.

All the newly acquired pieces date from the first half of the nineteenth century, several probably from about 1825 to 1840. That a highly skilled craftsman produced them is apparent from the colorless transparency of the material, its freedom from flaws, and the refined character of the forms. Peculiarly characteristic of the Blown Three Mold glass is the muted luster, the more rounded edges of its patterns creating a softer sheen than the hard brilliance and sharply defined planes and edges of cut glass.

ELIZABETH H. PAYNE

¹ George S. and Helen McKearin, *American Glass*, 1941, p. 243.

² Acc. no. 51.101. Height 8 inches. Gift of the Elizabeth and Allan Shelden Fund, 1951.

³ Helen and George S. McKearin, *Two Hundred Years of American Blown Glass*, 1950, Plate 50, No. 2.

⁴Acc. no. 51.4. Height $5\frac{1}{8}$ inches; diameter $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1951.

⁵Acc. no. 51.161. Height including stopper $10\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1951.

⁶Helen and George S. McKearin, *op. cit.*, Plate 87, No. 5.

⁷Acc. no. 51.162. Height $2\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1951.

⁸Acc. no. 51.163. Height $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1951.

⁹Acc. no. 51.103. Height $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches; with cover, $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1951.

¹⁰Acc. no. 51.102. Height 3 inches; with cover, $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Gift of the Elizabeth and Allan Shelden Fund, 1951.

COMPOSITION WITH
CLARINETS AND TIN HORN

by BEN SHAHN

American, contemporary

Gift of the Friends of
Modern Art, 1951



A COMPOSITION
by BEN SHAHN

The Friends of Modern Art, re-organized in 1951 and dedicated to the task of enriching the Museum's collection of Twentieth Century Art, have presented as their first gift to the Detroit Institute of Arts a distinguished work by Ben Shahn, *Composition with Clarinets and Tin Horn*.¹

Ben Shahn is today one of the most original and influential painters in this country. His style has been slowly and thoughtfully evolved over a period of years quite apart from the fashions of the moment and the temptations of quick

sales by following the changeable tastes of collectors and critics. In Shahn's paintings we find the satisfaction of seeing the world through the eyes of a sensitive and sincere artist whose interest lies in the realities of human relationships.

In his early works Shahn emphasized political and social relationships of man. More recently he has shown a growing interest in a different kind of realism—the realities of man's emotional and spiritual life. Painted in 1951, *Composition with Clarinets and Tin Horn* represents this new direction in the artist's work. In it he paints the emotional intensity of a figure enveloped in the wailing penetration of the blues. The throbbing intensity of the music is created by the insistent beat of the clarinets arranged in vertical rhythmic pattern interrupted by the shape of the tin horn decorated with gaudy symbols of honky-tonk dance halls. The bowed figure of a man pressing tensely knotted knuckles against his lowered head seems to shrink away from the strident rhythm of the clarinets and horn.

The gradual evolution and development of the artist's ideas for this painting can be clearly studied in a series of six preliminary sketches² recently presented to the Museum by John S. Newberry, Jr. In these sketches we see the figure transposed from an erect thoughtful position to the compressed and taut position of the final version as it gives in to the weight and intensity of the music. In hard tight brush strokes Shahn gradually refines and strengthens the power of his drawing. Three of the drawings have areas of colored wash in the background indicating the final blending of drawing and color in the finished panel.

Shahn's color, like his drawing, has become stronger in recent years. There has been a growing unity and effectiveness in his use of paint which is very evident in our painting. Using tempera in textural overlays of tone he builds great luminosity of color. Like many of his other recent paintings, *Composition with Clarinets and Tin Horn* is built on strong contrasts of vibrant blue-violet and crimson punctuated with areas of mahogany-like darks and sharp white accents.

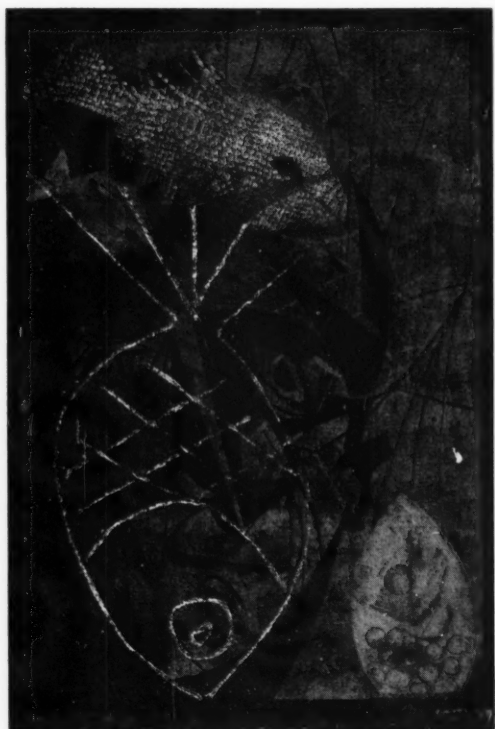
WILLIAM E. WOOLFENDEN

¹ Cat. No. 1036. Tempera on panel. Height 48 inches; width 36 inches. Signed at lower right: *Ben Shahn*. Acc. no. 51.85. Gift of The Friends of Modern Art, 1951.

² Brush and ink on paper. Height 12 inches; width 9 inches. Acc. nos. 51.121-126. Gift of John S. Newberry, Jr., 1951.

TWO COLOR WOODCUTS **by ANTONIO FRASCONI**

With income provided by the Elizabeth P. Kirby Fund for their purchase, the Museum's contemporary print collection was enriched last year by the acquisition of two striking color woodcuts by the young Uruguayan artist, Antonio Frasconi, who has more recently taken up residence in this country.



Left: SUNDAY. Right: AQUARIUM, by ANTONIO FRASCONI, American, contemporary
Gift of the Elizabeth P. Kirby Fund, 1951

Born in Uruguay in 1919, Frasconi first came to the United States in 1945 and since that time he has enjoyed an immediate and phenomenal success as the result of a series of distinguished exhibitions of his work, commencing at the Brooklyn Museum with an important one-man show which served to introduce him to the American public, and a succession now of five consecutive annual exhibitions in New York. Frasconi's work is represented in the print collections of the leading museums of the United States, as well as in the hands of numerous private collectors, all of whom have been quick to perceive the undeniable qualities of a fresh new talent who has proven himself worthy of serious consideration and respect. In 1950, Frasconi was commissioned by *Fortune Magazine* to design the cover for its August issue of that year, which subsequently was awarded an honorable mention in a national competition for magazine covers. Added to the other honors to this credit, Frasconi's recent illustrations for *Aesop's Fables* have been selected by the Cleveland Print Club for distribution to its membership as the 1952 'print of the year.'

In the two color woodblock prints acquired by the Museum, one entitled *Sunday*,¹ executed in 1948, and the other, *Aquarium*,² of the following year, the

predominant characteristics of Frasconi's style are well exemplified: a paramount sense of concentration and discipline governing an extraordinarily versatile and expressive imagination and realized in graphic terms which far surmount the spacial, dimensional, and plastic boundaries usually imposed by the woodcut medium. One is aware in these comparatively large and richly-textured prints, fundamentally simple though they are in essence, of an approach more akin to that of the painter, which in actuality is Frasconi's true *métier* in spite of the fact that his major contribution toward the development of contemporary art has been made through the recognition that he has gained as a graphic artist, especially in the field of color woodcut. Here he shows a natural proclivity for bold, segregated, abstract patternings, expressed with warm earthy colors superimposed upon grainy-textured backgrounds. These he often achieves by making interesting use of the rough woodblock surface itself in order to obtain added depth and power. Much of the delightful gaiety and fantasy encountered in Frasconi's work is conveyed by his tasteful introduction of witty detail which more frequently points up than adumbrates the forceful impact of his graphic designs.

The symbolic abstraction of fish forms found in *Aquarium* is conceived in subdued tonalities of red, violet, saffron-yellow, and black, against a mysterious blue-tinted background in which the glimmer of pale light through murky waters is suggested with utmost subtlety. By contrast, the color scheme of *Sunday* — revealing an arch and humorous maiden perched in the boughs of a tree as she strives for sabbath fruit, yellow-ripe, suspended out of reach among its geometrically designed zig-zag branches — is lighter keyed: overlapping shades of tan, orange-yellows, salmon-pinks, and again blacks, impressed upon a vivid cobalt-blue sky occupying the upper half of the print.

JOHN S. NEWBERRY, JR.

¹ Acc. no. 51.78. Height 20 inches; width 9¾ inches. Gift of the Founders Society, Elizabeth P. Kirby Fund, 1951.

² Acc. no. 51.79. Height 14 inches; width 9½ inches. Gift of the Founders Society, Elizabeth P. Kirby Fund, 1951.

SEEDED EARTH

by **ANDRÉ MASSON**

"The universe of Masson," says Kahnweiler, "is not a world of forms, . . . but one of forces." The focal and perceptive powers of the human eye have developed in close relation to the necessity and custom of looking at forms, and a picture in which form is not particularly important and which, furthermore, depicts something usually unseeable, is not easy to look at. Such a picture amounts to more than a visual experience, though the eye is the contact point.

Masson has, at least since 1925, spoken of himself as a surrealist painter, and with good reason, because he has proposed in his pictures to give expression to



SEEDED EARTH, by ANDRÉ MASSON, French, contemporary. Gift of W. Hawkins Ferry, 1952

those invisible, formless forces which lie behind and beyond the reality of the visible world. A picture or drawing by Masson may leave us with a doubt about the identity of shapes, but the impression of vitality, energy or struggle is a clear one.

Surrealism was crystallized as a definite and deliberate method in 1924 with a "manifesto" published by the French poet André Breton. Like the pictures of the German Blue Rider group and the Dadaists, who were also active before 1925, surrealist painting began in companionship with a literary style. It is not based on the direct experience of the senses—the eyes, especially, on which painters up to this time had primarily depended—but upon the deeper, hidden germinations of the imagination and the subconscious, upon the same speculative contemplation and penetration into the human soul and personality which fortify the poet and the novelist.

Seeded Earth, which Masson painted during his stay in America from 1941 to 1948, has been recently given to the Museum by W. Hawkins Ferry. It might have been subtitled "From the New World," like Dvorak's famous symphony, because the painter has set down in it his feeling of the burgeoning frontier, the immense fecundity of our country, without drawing upon specific "American" themes. The picture also recalls Masson's early experiments in "automatic"

drawing and painting in which he attempted to surrender all conscious control, working as Kandinsky said he did in his improvisations, "rather subconsciously in a state of strong inner tension." Of course it is possible, if we are so minded, to find veritable seed forms, sprouts, root tendrils, embryonic shapes, furrowed ground, nurturing sun and rain, but the significance of the painting lies in its enormous generative force which is the essence of life and the forms of life.

The black-stained background of the canvas does more than make the bright colors vivid and dramatic, as we shall see. The painting is done with complete spontaneity, without any preliminary sketching or notation on the canvas which, as Masson says "... paralyzes the arrival of light. I now begin with a dark background and lighten it as my painting begins to live and grow like a pancake." The fluid, unpredictable growth of a pancake on a griddle is perhaps an apt, if not surrealistic, reference to the practical side of a painter's cookery.

A. FRANKLIN PAGE

Cat. No. 1061. Height 30 inches; width 40 inches. Acc. no. 52.28. Gift of W. Hawkins Ferry, 1952.

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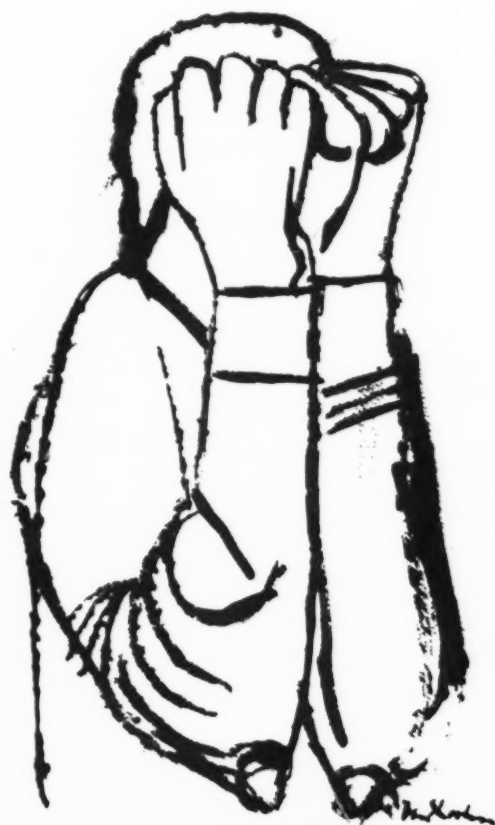
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Opposite: Two Pen and Ink
Drawings by BEN SHAHN for his
COMPOSITION WITH
CLARINETS AND TIN HORN
(see page 20)



The Detroit Institute of Arts

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